Amendment of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1992

554. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on the basis of proposals given by CBI, his Ministry is proposing to amend the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1992, to strengthen it further against poaching;

(b) whether the proposals have been gone through by the Task Force set up; and

(c) if so, the recommendations made by the Task Force?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended in 2003, making it more stringent for preventing wildlife crimes in the country. No further amendment to strengthen the Act against poaching is contemplated.

(b) and (c) The report of the Task Force constituted to review the management of Tiger Reserves in the country has not been received so far.

Permission to Monsanto-Mahyco for seed production

555. SHRI. R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has granted permission to MONSANTO-MAHYCO for seed production and large scale field trials of various varieties of hybrid cotton in South and Central Zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that permission was given for commercial release of Bt. Cotton Hybrids; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has accorded approval to

M/s. Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company Ltd. (Mahyco), Mumbai for seed production and large scale trials of nine Bt. Cotton varieties containing cry 1 AC and cry 1 Ab stacked genes. The varieties permitted are MRC-7301 BG II, MRC-7326 BG II, MRC-7351 BG II, MRC-7341 BG II and MRC-7347 in the Central zone and MRC-7160 BG-II, MRC-7201 BG-II, MRC-7351 BG-II and MRC-7347 BG-II in the south zone during Kharif 2005.

(c) and (d) The GEAC has also approved commercial release of MRC 6304 Bt. MRC-6301 Bt. MRC-6322 Bt. and MRC-6918 Bt. containing cry 1 Ac gene developed by M/s. Mahyco for a period of three years.

National River Conservation Plan

556. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that action plan under National River Conservation Plan is implemented by National River Conservation Directorate of his Ministry;

(b) if so, the details of action taken to improve the water quality of rivers during last three years and the amount spent on each work;

(c) the action plan to be taken during 2005-2006 and proposed to be taken during 2006-07; and

(d) whether the cost of work is borne by the Central Government or shared by State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), various pollution abatement works are undertaken for improving the quality of water in major rivers, such as Interception and Diversion (I&D) of Sewage, setting up of Sewage Treatment Plants (STP), Low Cost Sanitation (LCS), River Front Development (RFD), setting up of Crematoria etc. This Centrally Sponsored Scheme is under implementation in 158 towns along polluted stretches of 32 rivers spread over 19 States at an approved cost of Rs. 4704 crore. During the last three years, Detailed Project Reports for 202 projects worth Rs. 1459 crore were sanctioned, 20 projects for STP, 45 projects for I&D and 149 other projects were completed. Sewage